

# Beauties At War Over the Matinee Idol

## Jealousy of Maurice Chevalier Causes a Thrilling Battle Between Mistinguette's Loyal Maid and Nina Myral

Pretty Mlle. Mistinguette, who feels that Maurice Chevalier, the much admired Parisian matinee idol, should have eyes only for her in view of the fact that she bravely risked her life as a war spy in order to save him from prison

And this is Nina Myral, whose pleasing back and other charms are admired by M. Chevalier a great deal more than Mistinguette thinks proper under the circumstances



"Jars of cold cream, talcum powder boxes, perfume bottle, rouge pots and other aids to an actress' beauty filled the air as shrapnel did in the late war—and with almost as serious possibilities



"The Matinee Idol," the painting in the Paris Salon that is said to have been inspired by the amazing fascination Chevalier is exerting over the hearts of womankind

PARIS, December 14.  
WHAT is the secret of the extraordinary fascination which Maurice Chevalier exerts over the hearts of women? That is what Paris would like to find out.

Other actors there are as young and good looking, as talented in their profession and as charming in their manners as he. But not one of them begins to be the idol of the feminine world that Chevalier is.

His surprising popularity includes not only the thousands of women who crowd the theater to see him act, but also women of the stage—famous actresses, who have so many wealthy admirers that it's hard to understand their becoming so enamored of one of their own profession.

Wherever women gather Chevalier is a favorite topic—how well he played some role, what wonderful eyes he has, the good taste he shows in his dress, his charming manners, and so on through all the things which women find to admire in a stage hero.

Chevalier is overwhelmed with letters from his admirers and requests for photographs and autographs. Wherever he goes he is the center of so many admiring gazes that any less blasé hero would be tempted to flee in dismay. Goodness knows what beauty he couldn't have for the asking.

The latest evidence of the surprising hold he has taken on the hearts of Parisian women was furnished the other day by a thrilling battle which wrecked a dressing room in the Casino de Paris and left two lovely women badly battered in the effort to decide whether Mlle. Mistinguette or Mlle. Nina Myral has the better claim to Chevalier's favor.

Only one of these heroines actually took part in the combat, Mlle. Myral, but this made it none the less exciting and hardly fought. She had for an opponent Mistinguette's maid, Marie.

Marie is the most loyal of servants and as interested in anything that concerns Mistinguette's happiness as if it were her own. Also, she is a muscular

little lady, strong of arm, long of wind and fluent of vigorous speech when her anger is aroused.

For a long time Marie has been watching Chevalier's behavior toward the feminine admirers who continually swarm about him with growing jealousy. She thought it a crying shame that the actor should have eyes for any one except Mistinguette—not only because she thinks her mistress the loveliest creature that walks the boulevards, but also because it was Mistinguette who saved the actor from a German prison camp.

According to the stories that have long been current, during the war the French secret service sought Mistinguette's aid as a spy. They wanted her to use her coquettish beauty to pry certain precious military secrets from high officers of the German army.

Mistinguette agreed to undertake this delicate and dangerous mission on one condition—that her reward should be the release of her beloved Maurice Chevalier, who had been made a prisoner of war while fighting in the trenches.

The secret service agreed and pretty Mistinguette left Paris in disguise and made her way, at the risk of her life, into German territory. After many thrilling adventures she finally secured the desired information and returned with it to Paris.

She was delighted to find that the secret service had already made good its promise to her. Maurice Chevalier was a free man, back in Paris, alive and well.

Everybody who knew how fond Mistinguette had long been of Chevalier felt sure that this bit of devotion on her part

would surely make him every bit as fond of her. It was confidently predicted that as soon as the war was over they would be married.

The armistice came, but no wedding bells. Although Mistinguette and Chevalier played in the same company and were often seen together, he was apparently no more interested in her than in a number of other women, one of whom was Mlle. Nina Myral.

Mlle. Myral is almost if not quite as famous a beauty as Mistinguette. And she has the advantage of being several years younger.

While Mistinguette's fame as a beauty rests chiefly on the shapeliness of her legs, Mlle. Myral is admired most for the loveliness of her back. Connoisseurs describe this portion of her anatomy as one of nature's most artistic triumphs.

Maurice Chevalier made as little concealment of his admiration for Myral as Mistinguette did of her jealousy of it. He was always saying complimentary things about her back and her talent, both of which she displays with great liberality.

So the stage was all set for the trouble which culminated at the Casino de Paris shortly after Mlle. Myral was added to the program there in which Mistinguette and Chevalier were already appearing.

Just after the curtain had fallen the other evening on the last bit of feminine nudity in the Casino's current revue everybody behind the scenes was startled by a sudden outburst of screams—the voices of women, who shrieked all the louder as their cries were punctuated by the crash of breaking glass.

Feeling sure that nothing short of murder was being committed, half-clad actors and actresses, stage hands and

musicians and the manager of the theater hurried in the direction from which the sounds came.

Through the half-open door of Mistinguette's dressing room they saw Nina Myral and Mistinguette's maid, Marie, engaged in furious combat. The star to whom the room belonged and whose toilet articles, shoes and other possessions were being hurled back and forth with dreadful violence by the combatants, was nowhere in sight. If she had been perhaps Nina Myral would not have survived the battle as well as she did.

And a thrilling battle it was. Jars of cold cream, talcum powder boxes, perfume bottles, rouge pots and other aids to an actress' beauty filled the air as shrapnel did in the late war—and with almost as deadly possibilities.

Marie had a slight advantage in the encounter through knowing just where to look for fresh supplies of ammunition. When she had exhausted all the toilet articles within reach she began on the contents of a drawer that held her mistress' numerous collection of shoes.

Gold dancing slippers, heavy Russian boots and patent leather pumps went whizzing through the air. Nina Myral seized a heavy hand mirror to try to protect herself from this barrage of footgear. And when her opponent had flung her last shoe and was bending over to get a handful of shoe trees she let fly the mirror at her.

Luckily the glass struck the maid only a glancing blow but it was enough to

send her to the floor half fainting from pain and baffled rage.

The non-combatants who crowded about the door took advantage of this lull in the hostilities to step inside the wrecked dressing room and prevent the love battle being resumed.

While some of them went to the aid of the stricken maid others led Nina Myral away.

As nearly as anybody can find out the cause of the trouble was Mlle. Myral's discovery that a piece of jewelry Maurice Chevalier had given her was missing from her dressing table.

Her jealousy of Mistinguette is said to have made her jump to the conclusion that she or her maid had taken the trinket.

She went to Mistinguette's dressing room to try to verify her suspicions. There Marie, the faithful maid, discovered her and the battle was on.

Chevalier has declined to comment at any length on the love battle or to indicate with which of the combatants his sympathies lie.



Maurice Chevalier, the smiling and good looking cause of all the trouble in Paris

"Oh, those women!" he exclaimed with an air of intense boredom when a newspaper man asked him about the incident. "I have only the wish to be known as a good actor. I hope I am that."

If Chevalier really is as annoyed as he pretends to be by the attentions of his feminine admirers and by the lengths to which some of them let their jealousy carry them he is certainly a subject for pity. It requires the force of a large staff of hard-working secretaries to handle the fond letters with which they overwhelm him and to protect him from the importunities of those who seek to meet him, who beg for his autograph or photograph and who press him to accept gifts of flowers and books and even more valuable tokens of their devotion.

He holds this actor has taken on the hearts of womankind is one of the most remarkable phenomena of present-day Paris life. It is said to have inspired the much-discussed painting, "The Matinee Idol," which is on exhibition in the Paris Salon.

This picture shows an actor seated at the make-up table in his dressing room in the midst of preparations for his stage appearance. He is surrounded by women admirers whose rapt attitudes show them to be hanging eagerly on his every word and going into ecstasies over every move he makes.

Yet, with all the opportunities for love and

marriage he has at his disposal, Chevalier seems to remain wholly heart free. His repeated declarations that he is wedded to his art and has time only for improving his voice and keeping himself in good physical trim for the difficult dances he performs seem to be more than mere affectation.

Only the jealous eyes of broken-hearted Mistinguette have been able to see that he favors Nina Myral more than any one of the scores of other attractive women with whom he is frequently seen dancing

or dining along the boulevards. Maurice Chevalier expects to visit America in the near future, and he has already given his opinion of American girls.

"Most of them that I meet," he said, "appear like boys. I mean by this that they have all the self-assurance and independence which we French are accustomed to associate with the men."

"There is one thing I am sure can be said in their favor—they dance very charmingly, indeed, far better than the average French girl."